

[Saddler's Point—Ortega]

26085

April 10, 1939.

Mrs. J. [R?]. (Violet T.) [Snead?]

562 [Orgam?] Street,

Jacksonville,

Florida.

Rose Shepherd, Writer.

SADDLER's POINT - ORTEGA.

Mrs. Snead, with her husband, two sons, and a daughter, settled in the Lackawanna section of Jacksonville when the Atlantic Coast Line Railway shops were established in that locality where the men of the family secured work. Mr. Snead has retired, but the two sons are still employed in the shops, living on nearby Edison Avenue with their families in homes of their own, while the daughter, also married, lived two doors away at 570 [Orgam?] Street. There are no sidewalks, so that it was necessary to walk down the shell paved street from Edison Avenue to the number 562.

Mrs. Snead is a well preserved woman of 70, and answered the knock at the door, the bell being out of order. She is rather stout, with blue eyes and reddish brown hair, and was dressed in a wine-colored print dress. She invited me in and glanced with pride around the living room of the small green bungalow home where touches of her handwork were

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in evidence in the crocheted lace on the edges of the curtains at the windows and the numerous cushions on the couch in the corner and the easy chairs.

A large pasteboard card by the outer door bore the penciled notice - "Fresh Eggs, 25 cents."

"Yes, we keep a few chickens," Mrs. Snead said. "My husband is bothered quite a bit with asthma, and it is good for me to be out in the open as much as possible. The big yard with the flowers 2 with the flowers and chickens keep him occupied. He was rather disappointed that eggs were so plentiful this [Easter?] time he could not obtain a higher price.

"In reference to Saddler's Point," she said, "the original Saddler plantation comprised 4,000 acres in that section settled by the Saddler family, but when we went there in [1881?] during the month of October, it belonged to Dr. Sanderson, of Jacksonville. A portion had been sold to a development company as a recreation and hunting preserve, operating under the imposing title of the Ortega Red, Gun and Golf Company. In this way the name was changed to 'Ortega,' but just why they chose that name or what it means I am unable to say.

"The company was interested in building a bridge across the St. John River at the point, and [sold??] and took quite a number of subscriptions from the property owners there and elsewhere. My husband helped in mapping out and working on the approaches, but that it as far as the project got. The bridge itself never materialized, and all the stockholders lost their investment.

"When we located there, the old Saddler home of hand-[hown?] lumber and built with hand-wrought nails was still standing. The company did some work in trying to repair and restore the old home to be used as a clubhouse. That project, too, fell through, and now the old house is all gone. It was claimed the old place was haunted, and several staid in

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the building over-night trying to substantiate the fact, but that, too, fell through,” she said with a laugh.

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“Some of the slaves who worked on the old plantation are still living among the negroes in the Yukon settlement.

“United States Senator Richard K. Call was one of the company interested in building the bridge; a Mr. Davis was the government engineer who had the contract to build it; Captain McVeigh, Danny [Hennessy?] were among those who were also beat out of their money.

“The old Saddler homestead was on the riverfront, and not very far away were the two cemeteries; one for white people and the other for colored. The last I saw of the two cemeteries they were almost overgrown with shrubs, briars, and weeds, and I doubt very much if any trace could be found of either of them today.

“We were only out there one year, going out west to Colorado where we staid for ten years. Then when we return to Florida we settled here in [Lackawanna?].

“I should think that Dr. Sanderson who owned the property could give the most reliable information in regard to it.”